

AGRICULTURE & FOOD SECURITY IN CANADA

Food security is when every person, at all times, has physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences.¹

Secure access to safe and affordable food is an issue in Canada, and also globally. About 2 billion people in the world currently experience moderate or severe food insecurity.²

CONSEQUENCES OF FOOD INSECURITY

Household **food insecurity** is the inadequate or insecure access to nutritious food at the family level. It is a serious problem that hinders healthy physical and mental development and burdens our healthcare system. 1 in 8 households in Canada struggle to put food on the table, amounting to over 4 million Canadians, including 1.2 million children.³

How do farming practices impact food security?

Technological advancements and better management practices in agriculture have improved food security in Canada.

Farmers are becoming more efficient. They can grow more food using the same or less land, water and fuel.



Between 1962 and 2012, **egg production** increased by 50% while using 81% less land, 69% less water and 41% less energy.⁶



Canadian **beef producers** raised 32% more beef in 2011 than in 1981 using 27% fewer cattle on 24% less land.⁷



Plant science innovations have increased crop **yield** (production), quality and nutritional value.

DYK? 11.2 MILLION METRIC TONNES OF AVOIDABLE FOOD LOSS OCCURS EACH YEAR IN CANADA.¹⁰

Combine harvesting canola

Household food insecurity is linked to poverty. Over 60% of households that depend on social assistance in Canada are food insecure.⁴ In addition, even though 65% of food insecure households are employed, their income is not sufficient to buy enough nutritious food for their families.⁵



Beef producers now raise more beef using few resources.

Food waste contributes to food insecurity. Food that is produced but never eaten is considered food loss or waste. Food loss and waste occurs throughout the entire supply chain: on the farm, in transport, at food processing plants, in grocery stores and restaurants, and at home.⁸ Examples include a piece of fruit damaged during transport, food items in grocery stores that spoil before being sold, leftovers from meals prepared at home that are not eaten, or food prepared in a restaurant that is discarded.⁹

AGRICULTURE & FOOD SECURITY IN CANADA

Current actions to reduce food loss and waste:¹¹

Processing of “ugly” fruits and vegetables, e.g., “baby” carrots made from deformed carrots

Tax credits supporting food donation activities

Improving processing methods so that less food is lost, e.g., processing cracked eggs that cannot be sold as whole eggs into liquid, frozen or powdered form for restaurants and bakeries, or products like mayonnaise or shampoo¹²

Innovations creating new markets for agricultural crops, fisheries and inedible portions of food (such as processing cranberry pits to make cranberry seed oil)

Research programs focusing on:

- improving disease resistance for greenhouse grown vegetables
- recycling agricultural waste (e.g., farmed fish) by creating new animal feeds

Deformed vegetables can be processed into ready-to-eat foods.



Egg farmer checking eggs for cracks

There's a wide range of food available at affordable prices.

Canadians pay some of the lowest prices for food in the world¹³ and have access to a diverse range of food products.

- **Producing foods in Canada ensures we don't have to completely rely on imports.** About 70% of groceries purchased in Canadian stores are produced here.¹⁴
- **Plant science innovations lead to direct savings for Canadians,** helping us save more than \$4,400 on our food bill each year.¹⁵
- In response to consumer demand for healthier diets, **foods recommended in *Canada's Food Guide* are now more available.** This has led to changes in the types and quantities of food Canadian farmers produce. From 2009 to 2019, there was a 20% increase in fresh fruit production in Canada.¹⁶

THERE'S STILL WORK TO DO.

Access to nutritious food remains a problem for low income neighbourhoods. About 1 in 5 children in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick lived in households reporting some food insecurity. It's an even bigger issue in northern remote communities where people pay extremely high prices for healthy fresh food. Over 78% of children in Nunavut live in food insecure households, as do 30% of children in the Northwest Territories.¹⁷

Field of carrots

